

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Saturday, June 12. 1708.

WHen Mr. *Asgil* wrote a Book to prove the Possibility of Translation out of this World without Dying, having spent some Thoughts upon his Arguments, in order either to clear them up to my self, or obtain a clear View of their being a Mistake; I found, the best Step to confute the Error was to grant all that was alledg'd, which could with Safety be granted, and then enquire into the End of the Thing; and in searching after this, it soon came to my Thoughts, that the whole Delusion lay in the Surface of Words, put upon the Thing, and that really this new Scheme of passing out of Life left us but just where we were before, and was summ'd up in this short Article.

That to be translated was to be changed, and to die was but a Change; that *Enoch* went no more directly into Heaven with his Flesh and Blood on him, than *Elijah* went with his Mantle, but that both must suffer the necessary Change of Life in the Passage; that this Change, from a corruptible to a glorified State, was the same thing at Death, and Death was a Change and no more, so that one is as near a Way to Heaven as the other; a Grave or a Fiery Chariot is all one to a Christian—*Ad te quacun- que vocas*, is his Prayer—— His End is Heaven, and he can neither gain or lose by the Passage.

Just thus, I think, is our Way to speak to these poor disappointed People in the Affair,

Affair of raising a dead Man, that had they never so strong Expectations of his being rais'd, it had in it no Possibility of Success; since the Spirit of GOD, who never acts but with Coherence to all its other Actions, had, as I may say, foreclosed all Effects or Advantages that could have accrued to the World by it, and so we must have concluded, so great a Miracle must have been wrought to no Manner of Signification.

I must premise to these People, that they allow the Scripture to be the Word of GOD, the Rule of Faith, and the Foundation of all Arguments in this Case— This on all Occasions they profess, and if they did not, I would say nothing to them; for there is no arguing with those that will deny Principles; on this Supposition, then, I would ask them this Question.

Is this Miracle of raising a Man from the Dead expected, in order to confirm us in the Belief of some Truths and Doctrines already revealed or taught, or to help our Faith in the Belief of some Doctrine yet to be revealed, and yet to be taught, and let them take which they will, *it cannot be*, the Scripture has foreclosed them both.

As to confirming our Faith in Truths and Doctrines already taught, the Scripture is plain against them; when *Dives* cries to Heaven to have one sent to warn his Brethren, *Abraham* is represented, answering, They have *Moses* and the Prophets, that is, the written Word or Preaching of the Gospel, take it which way you will—And upon his renewing his Request, it is declared from Heaven, That they who will not hear, that is, believe a preach'd Gospel, or will not regard the Word of GOD, *must be lost*, for one shall not be sent from the Dead to instruct them, nor if that were done, would it be effectual— So that in short GOD has determined that such a thing shall not be, and has shut up *the End*, confirming our Faith *to the Means*; the Word of GOD has first deny'd the Experiment, and secondly condemn'd it as to its Signification; and the Spirit of GOD, who never acts in vain, cannot deviate from it self.

If then they fly to the Alternative, *viz.* That this Miracle should be wrought to form a Faith in some new Doctrine yet to be re-

vealed; I shall ask, is this Doctrine in the Word of GOD, or is it not? If it be, it is not new, and to be revealed— And then let us know *what it is*—If it be not in the Word of GOD, that is first to deny the Scripture to be a full Revelation of the Mind of GOD in our Salvation, a complete Rule of Faith and Doctrine, &c. —And it must come under one of these two denominations; either that of the Apostle, *if an Angel from Heaven teach you any other Doctrine, let him be accursed*, Galat. 1. 8. or he that addeth to it, *GOD shall add unto him all the Plagues written in this Book*. Rev. 22. 18.

They have but one Resort more, and that is, That this Miracle was to confirm the Truth of their being Divinely Inspired; and this I presume, they will not mention now, since the Argument turns so invincibly upon them, that the Disappointment must argue their being Diabolically deluded.

I might say something of the Person they pitch'd upon to work this Miracle upon; and tho' I shall be very shy of making Reflections, or loading the Memory of the Dead, yet I must touch upon it; Either he was a *good Man* or a *bad Man*; if he was a bad Man, they cannot give an Instance of one bad Man that ever return'd from the Grave, no not in the whole Word of GOD; *Lazarus* was a good Man, the Lad raised by *Elijah* was a *Hebrew Child*, and *Dorcas* a Disciple; when the Graves were opened at the Passion, they were the Bodies of the Saints only that arose, and they cannot give us one Instance of a wicked Man that was ever raised from the Dead; the Phantasm of *Saul* and *Samuel* I do not call a raising from the Dead, and yet if it were, *Samuel* was a good Man without doubt.

On the other hand, if this Dr. *Eames* was a good Man, then let them tell us, if he repented or reform'd his profess'd Socinianism, which he was known for many Years to maintain and defend, most impiously denying the Divinity of the Blessed Redeemer of the World; and if they cannot do this, he cannot pass for a good Man with me.

Thus their Pretence of raising a Man from the Dead appears, *at least I think so*, to have
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no Foundation or Authority, either in Scripture or in the Nature of the thing; I am loth to upbraid them with the Consequence, for any body might have predicted the Consequence with a less Portion of the Spirit of Prophecy, than they pretend to.

And now methinks I would apply this Disappointment to those People, who, being at first taken with this Novelty, and drawn in by the assuming, positive Assertions of the first Pretenders, had been desired by their Instructors but to lay the whole Stress of their Faith upon this Miracle, and who have openly declar'd, that if this were not perform'd, they would acknowledge themselves deluded and impos'd upon—GOD has been so Good to you all, as not to suffer the Devil to make any sham Miracle or Appearance, that should pass for a Similitude of the thing, that might leave the Cause doubtful, and make some People think it was done, and some not.

The Prince of the Air was not let loose to affright or amuse the People, as he has been permitted to do among the Heathen; if he has the Power to raise Storms, Tempests, Thunders and Lightning, *as some say he can, tho' I do neither grant or believe it*, yet he has been restrain'd from doing it here; the Delusion therefore is uncontested now, and you who in the Simplicity of your Souls gave way to it, if any such there are, ought to be very thankful to Almighty GOD, that has thus clearly undeceiv'd you, and for the future beware, how you give heed to the melancholly Vapours of wild Men, who, if they do not on purpose design to deceive, are yet deceived themselves, and seek to involve you equally in the same Distraction.

The Charm is now over, the Snare is broken, and if ye please you are escaped; *if you will not escape, no Body can help that*; not to abandon these Pretences now, would be to profess your selves willingly impos'd upon, and that you court the Delusion, *even as such*; nor can you be honest to your selves, to your Promises, or to your Maker, whose Judgments you ought to apprehend are upon you, in giving you up to believe Lies and to strong Delusions; the Design of which is plain in the Scripture, unless you own the plain Conviction that must now be

upon you, and return to your Religious Sences again.

I do confess, the Prevalency of this new Delusion has been surprizing, and nothing has been more strange to me in it, than to see Men of Sense, of Parts, and of good Characters in the World, for their Judgments and Understanding, fall in with it—Men that have been all their Lives Religiously dispos'd, that have been Masters of Reason, known in the Scriptures, and sound in the Principles of the Christian Religion; that these Men should have been thus deluded, seems to signify something more, than if it had been the common Enthusiasm of Men weak in Judgment, wild in Notion, and easie to be impos'd upon.

I know, it has been earnestly wish'd and industriously inquir'd into also, that these unhappy Delusions should have been found only among the *Dissenters*; some again have been fond of laying it all at the Door of the *Quakers*, whom they would fain have reckoned the Broachers of these Novelties.—And this they have especially spread over the Nation, in the most remote Parts of it, where I have frequently met with it, as entirely thrown upon the *Quakers*, that it was wholly of Kin to the former Extravagancies, *as they called them*, of those People, and was only the same Game of Enthusiasm acting over again.

But shall I do Justice here, *not to the Quakers only*, but to every Sort of Men among us? *In order to which*, I venture to affirm the following Particulars, which on the common Account of Persons and Things, I believe, will be found to hold true.

I know, we are mighty fond of loading the *Quakers* with many of our own Follies, and some will hardly allow them to have the Use of their Reason, while they practise less Reason in those Censures than most of the *Quakers* are Masters of: These People, I presume, generally speak before they think; I am sure in the Case before us they speak before they enquire; for before I examine who *were* or *were not* among the new Prophets, I pretend to say, and am very sure of it, that there were fewer of the *Quakers* among them, than of any Sort or Sect of People in this Nation.

I having,